

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

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USSAG NKP

13TH ADVON UDORN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13889

LIMDIS

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TAGS: PFOR, TH, CB

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON RECENT VISIT TO CHINA

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: BANGKOK 13344

EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICERS SEPTEMBER 4 DISCUSSED THE
AUGUST 7-20 VISIT OF THE THAI BADMINTON TEAM TO THE
PRC WITH THE TWO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA)
OFFICERS WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED THE TEAM. THEY CHARACTERIZED
THEIR TALKS WITH THE PRC AS A PRESENTATION OF POINTS OF
VIEW RATHER THAN NEGOTIATIONS. THE TALKS CENTERED ON
THE FOLLOWING:

1. SINO-THAI TRADE: THE CHINESE NOTED THAT WHILE THEY
WERE INTERESTED IN TRADE WITH THAILAND, ONE COULD BE
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POSSIBLE AS LONG AS REVOLUTIONARY PROCLAMATION 53 OF

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (NEC) IS IN EFFECT. THE CHINESE URGED THE RTG TO RESCIND ARTICLE 53 COMPLETELY IN ORDER TO MAKE WAY FOR SINO-THAI TRADE. THE CABINET HAS SINCE ANNOUNCED THAT ARTICLE 53 WILL BE AMENDED, THOUGH NOT RESCINDED, TO PERMIT CHINA TO TRADE WITH THAILAND UNDER THE SAME CONDITIONS NOW POSSIBLE FOR OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES.

2. "SECRET" TRADE TALKS IN HONG KONG: AN AUGUST 25 STORY IN "THE NATION" THAT "SECRET" SINO-THAI TRADE TALKS WERE HELD IN HONG KONG BETWEEN THE CHIEF OF THE CHINA TRADE OFFICE AND A DELEGATION OF THAI BUSINESSMEN REPRESENTING THE RTG WAS FALSE. WHEN CONTACTED BY MFA OFFICIALS, THE EDITOR OF "THE NATION" STATED THAT HE HAD DISPATCHED A CORRESPONDENT TO HONG KONG TO INTERVIEW MEMBERS OF THE BADMINTON TEAM AS THEY EXITED CHINA. THE CORRESPONDENT MISSED THE GROUP AND FABRICATED THE AUGUST 25 STORY AFTER NOTICING SEVERAL THAI MERCHANTS IN HONG KONG.

3. PRC REPRESENTATIVES AT ECAFE IN BANGKOK: THE CHINESE SAID THAT THE ARRIVAL OF THEIR REPRESENTATIVES TO ECAFE WOULD BE DELAYED BECAUSE OF A SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL. THEIR EXPERIENCED MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICERS WERE FULLY COMMITTED WITH UNITED NATIONS REQUIREMENTS AT THIS TIME AND THEY SIMPLY HAD NO ONE TO SEND TO BANGKOK IN SEPTEMBER AS ORIGINALLY DISCUSSED. (PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTIKACHORN MADE THE SAME POINT DURING HIS AUGUST 29 PRESS CONFERENCE.) THE THAI WERE CONVINCED THAT THE CHINESE WERE SINCERE IN GIVING THIS REASON. ACCORDING TO THE CHINESE, THE REPRESENTATION, WHEN IT COMES, WILL BE IN THE FORM OF A STUDY MISSION TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT OFFICE.

4. CHINESE SUPPORT OF THE INSURGENCY IN THAILAND: THE CHINESE TOLD THE THAI NOT TO WORRY ABOUT THE ROAD THE CHINESE HAD BUILT IN LAOS. THE THAI IMPLIED THEY TOOK LITTLE COMFORT ABOUT THAT ASSURANCE. THE THAI SAID THE CHINESE APPEARED EMBARRASSED ABOUT THE ISSUE OF CHINESE SUPPORT FOR

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THAI INSURGENTS. THE THAI THUS DID NOT PRESS IT. EMBASSY OFFICERS CITED A RECENT PRESS ARTICLE ABOUT THE ALLEGED RTG OFFER TO THE NATIONALIST CHINESE TO CLOSE DOWN THEIR RADIO STATION AT MAE JAN IN NORTH THAILAND, AND POSSIBLY THEIR INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS HEADQUARTERED THERE. THEY THEN ASKED THE THAI WHETHER THAT MIGHT BE A QUID PRO QUO FOR PRC CESSATION OF AID TO THE THAI INSURGENTS. THE MFA OFFICERS APPEARED UNAWARE OF THE

ORDER, AND SAID THAT THEY KNEW OF NO CONNECTION.

5. CHINESE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND: THE THAI SAID THAT NEWSPAPER REPOTS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE CHINESE HAD STATED THAT CHINA WAS NOT DISTURBED BY THE PRESENCE OF U.S. FORCES IN THAILAND WERE NOT ACCURATE. ACCORDING TO THE THAI, NEITHER SIDE RAISED THE SUBJECT OF U.S. FORCES IN THAILAND. THUS, IN CONTRAST TO THE IMPLICATION IN PARAGRAPH THREE OF THE REFTEL, THE CHINESE NOT ONLY EXPRESSED NO UNEASINESS ON THIS ISSUE, THEY HAD NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT AT ALL.

6. YOUTHFUL LEADERS OF FACTORIES AND COMMUNES: BOTH THAI OFFICIALS WERE STRUCK BY THE PREDOMINANCE OF YOUNG, WELL INFORMED, AND ARTICULATE MEN IN POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY EVIDENT DURING TOURS OF FACTORIES AND COMMUNES.

7. PRC COVERAGE OF THAILAND: AT THE PRC MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THE THAI FOUND A GENERAL LACK OF IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THAILAND. THE CHINESE APPEARED TO FORM THEIR OPINIONS FROM READING "PHIM THAI", "SIAM RATH", AND "THE NATION. THE THAI SUGGESTED THAT THE CHINESE AT LEAST BEGIN READING "PRACHATHIPATAI" AS WELL. THE DESK OFFICER FOR THAILAND WAS LIU YUNG-CHEN, A YOUNG MAN WHO ONLY RECENTLY GRADUATED FROM A UNIVERSITY; HE COULD READ THAI BUT SPOKE IT POORLY. UNGER

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